

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Harold E. Watson
Chief, Air Technical Intelligence Center
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

THROUGH: Director of Intelligence
Headquarters, USAF
Washington 25, D.C.

SUBJECT: Request for Data on Various Versions of BISON

25X1X7

1. At the [redacted] Aircraft Production Conference held in Washington, D.C. during the week of 5-9 November 1956, the participating intelligence agencies exchanged views on Soviet heavy bomber production. It was found that the range of estimated BISON production among agencies was narrow. The feeling was unanimous that the aircraft was still undergoing extensive design changes.

2. Within the framework of general agreement on BISON estimates, there was uncertainty regarding the number and significance of visible external BISON modifications. One analysis of these modifications has led to a possible lessening of the degree of confidence placed in [redacted] information. The small absolute, but fairly substantial relative, differences that exist among the estimates of the various intelligence agencies are to some extent the result of this analysis. These differences are of considerable concern to ONR because of the obvious impact of BISON production on economic cost analysis and assessments of economic capabilities. 25X1B4d

3. Because of the critical nature of BISON production estimates to the over-all economic intelligence objectives of CIA, ONR is reappraising the BISON production situation. This reappraisal will serve as a basis for any changes deemed necessary in the economic estimates, and possibly as a test of [redacted]

[redacted] In line with these objectives the following material is requested from AFOTM-4: 25X1B4d

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a. Photographs of the original BISON and of each modification which can be identified in later BISOES. The date of photography should be included in each case.

b. Three-view drawings and detailed technical descriptions of the configurations to show the manner in which each BISON version varies from the others.

c. A list showing how many of each BISON version have been seen and the dates on which they were seen.

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d. [REDACTED] broken down according to the different BISON versions.

k. ORR has placed a high priority on the re-examination of the BISON production situation. The materials requested in par. 3 above will greatly facilitate the project. Upon completion of the re-examination ORR would be pleased to disseminate the conclusions to AFM-4.

OTTO E. GUTHE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports

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ORR:I/AR: [REDACTED] 3835 (7 Dec 56)

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